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**OPERATIONAL MANEUVER FROM THE SEA (OMFTS): SECURING
OPERATIONAL/STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OR DIEN BIEN PHU REVISITED?**

By

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College, in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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The Marine Corps' capstone operational warfighting concepts for maritime power projection, Operational Maneuver from the Sea (OMFTS) and Ship-To-Objective Maneuver (STOM), capitalize on the USMC maneuver warfare philosophy and support the NSS, NMS, and JV2010 guidance to Shape-Respond-Prepare Now. The principles and execution of these concepts offer warfighting Commanders in Chief (CINCs) options and solutions to asymmetrical threats in the 21st Century. However, those who choose to ignore the past are destined to repeat it. OMFTS/STOM vertical assault operations incur sustainment and fire support challenges similar to those encountered at Dien Bien Phu. This paper examines these sustainment and fire support challenges through a historical lens. These operational challenges represent a microcosm of challenges for the "Focused Logistics" and "Precision Engagement" tenets of Joint Vision 2010, and thus may influence our current and future strategy to defeat 21st Century asymmetrical threats.

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INTRODUCTION

The increased asymmetrical threats in the 21st Century will challenge the ability of the United States to protect its national interests throughout the world. The armed forces of the United States require a flexible, responsive, and sustainable force projection capability that will secure early and decisive advantages over our enemies.² Our National Military Strategy (NMS) to shape, respond, and prepare with strategic agility, overseas presence, decisive force, and power projection,³ will demand expanded Navy and Marine Corps visionary concepts and capabilities. The White Papers, “...*From the Sea*” and “*Forward...from the Sea*” outline a Naval vision for Maritime Operations in the chaotic littorals, and provide the foundation for *Operational Maneuver From The Sea* (OMFTS). OMFTS and *Ship-To-Objective Maneuver* (STOM) represent the Marine Corps’ capstone warfighting concepts and maneuver warfare philosophy that are leading our Navy and Marine Corps’ force projection capability in the 21st Century.⁴ The OMFTS/STOM concepts directly support Joint Vision 2010 (JV2010) and the NMS. However, we must co-evolve Doctrine, Organization, Training and education, Material, Leadership, and Personnel (DOTMLP) to ensure OMFTS/STOM realize their full potential.

Theater warfighting Commanders in Chief (CINCs) and Joint Force Commanders (JFCs) seek expanded capabilities for quick response options to rapidly unfolding events in an increasingly asymmetrical, hostile environment. The Navy and Marine Corps Amphibious triad of the Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC), Advanced Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAAV), and MV-22 Tilt-Rotor aircraft that supports OMFTS/STOM will offer theater CINCs/JFCs quick response options and increased reach and approach [*Direction/Axis*] to those asymmetrical threats across the spectrum of conflict. This increased reach and

approach of OMFTS/STOM, especially vertical assault operations, will demand focused sustainment and fire support capabilities with equal reach, approach, and responsiveness. This requirement highlights significant operational implications for theater CINCs/JFCs and the Navy/Marine Corps' ability to 'operationalize' the Joint Vision 2010 Focused Logistics and Precision Engagement concepts.

As the MV-22/CH-53E vertical assault support team of the forward deployed Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) [MEU(SOC), Aviation Combat Element (ACE)] emerges within the next three years, CINCs/JFCs will be better able to quickly respond to theater threats. This enhanced capability of the OMFTS/STOM concept will exploit the maneuver and surprise principles of war, but may also jeopardize the principle of security. There are risks to deploying forces deep into enemy territory to secure operational or strategic objectives. The long-range, vertical assault, quick response option of the STOM concept could introduce a critical vulnerability if not adequately supported *from the sea* with focused logistics (sustainment) and precision engagement (fires). The examination of these operational implications will serve as a forewarning to prevent repeating the tragedy of Dien Bien Phu that exemplified sustainment and fire support challenges associated with supporting ground forces with an extended "air bridge."

Operational Maneuver from the Sea (OMFTS)

OMFTS is the Marine Corps capstone concept that refines the vision articulated in the Navy/Marine Corps White Papers, ...*From The Sea and Forward...From The Sea*. In these documents, the Navy and Marine Corps "presented a common vision for a future which skillfully handled Naval Forces would enable the United States to exert its influence in the

chaotic littoral regions of the world.”⁵ OMFTS seeks to leverage significant enhancements in technology, information management, battlespace mobility, and the lethality of conventional weapons to project combat power over the horizon to secure operational/strategic objectives. This concept is the visionary amalgamation of two Marine Corps doctrines: Warfighting (MCDP 1), and Expeditionary Operations (MCDP 3). The execution of OMFTS will: “1) Focus on the operational objective, 2) Use the sea as maneuver space, 3) Generate overwhelming tempo and momentum, 4) Pit strengths against weaknesses, 5) Emphasize intelligence, deception, and flexibility, and 6) Integrate all organic Joint and Combined assets.”⁶ OMFTS is thus a viable capability consistent with the NMS power projection and forcible entry requirements, and the Dominant Maneuver tenet of JV2010.

Ship-To-Objective Maneuver (STOM)

STOM is the linchpin maneuver warfare concept of OMFTS that projects a combined-arms force by air and surface means against inland objectives.⁷ Specifically, STOM leverages maneuver, speed, and surprise to conduct combined-arms penetration and exploitation operations from the sea, over the horizon, and directly to objectives ashore. The principles of STOM thus focus on the operational objective to strike enemy critical vulnerabilities, treat the sea as maneuver space, and project combat power through exploitable enemy defensive gaps to apply strengths against weaknesses. OMFTS/STOM require the enemy to defend a vast area against seaborne mobility and deep power projection, which will keep him on the horns of an operational/strategic dilemma, and render most of his force irrelevant.⁸

Although STOM's design gives the CINCs/JFCs rapid, flexible, offensive deterrent options to meet a broad range of theater security needs, there are challenges to the concept. Sustainment for STOM relies on the Sea-Based Logistics concept that seeks to support deeply inserted vertical assault forces and rapidly penetrating surface assault forces simultaneously with 'logistics pull' vice 'logistics push.' Fire support for STOM relies on immediate and responsive high volume suppression and neutralization capabilities that are highly accurate and lethal at extended distances. This will require fires that are available 'around the clock' and in all weather conditions from support agencies responding with speed and accuracy.⁹ These sustainment and fires requirements for STOM parallel the JV2010 Focused Logistics and Precision Engagement tenets.

JOINT VISION 2010

Is the pursuit of technological superiority making us more vulnerable to asymmetrical threats? As we look to the future, we must not forget the lessons of the past; for the French enjoyed technological superiority and fought with comparatively advanced warfighting concepts during the Indochina War (1946-1954), yet were defeated by the Communist Vietminh at Dien Bien Phu!

JV2010 addresses the "Prepare Now" component of the NMS, establishing a "conceptual template for future joint warfighting"¹⁰ that provides guidance for the individual armed services' warfighting concepts. JV2010 is thus a vision of how to "strengthen our military capabilities by taking advantage of improved technology and the vitality and innovation of our people to prepare our forces for the 21st Century."¹¹ Technology is clearly the core of these joint warfighting concepts, and we increasingly rely upon our technological superiority

as the enabler for emerging operational concepts to achieve rapid, decisive, strategic superiority and victory. Additionally, JV2010 assumes that achieving Dominant Maneuver, Precision Engagement, Focused Logistics, and Full-Dimensional Protection through technological superiority will always be the correct way to achieve our strategic *ends* throughout the full range of military operations.¹²

The Marine Corps warfighting concepts OMFTS/STOM support the tenets of JV2010 and seek also to leverage technology. It is critical that these concepts evolve along converging paths. If JV2010 is to be fully realized, then the OMFTS/STOM concepts, as well as the Army, Navy, and Air Force warfighting concepts must be developed within a congruent framework of operational design. Therefore, we should examine OMFTS/STOM sustainment and fires in association with the operational concepts of Focused Logistics and Precision Engagement.

Focused Logistics: It is often said, “Amateurs study tactics while professionals study logistics.” JV2010 recognizes the primacy of responsive, flexible, and precise logistics focused to sustain combat power at extended distances, with reduced lead times, and in remote locations. The concept envisions a system-of-systems that will be “the fusion of information, logistics, and transportation technologies to provide rapid crises response, to track even while enroute, and to deliver tailored logistics packages and sustainment directly at the strategic, operational, and tactical level of operations.”¹³ This system will not only provide focused logistics to widely dispersed and rapidly maneuvered combat forces, but is expected to afford future Joint Forces *even more* mobility, versatility, and projection. Focused logistics thus complements Dominant Maneuver, Full-Dimensional Protection, and

Precision Engagement. While Focused Logistics represents the essential “tail” for national combat power projection, Precision Engagement represents the “teeth” of our National Military Strategy.

Precision Engagement: JV2010 emphasizes the requirement for technological advances in the development of a more effective precision engagement capability. The concept envisions precision engagement systems that “enable our forces to locate the objective or target, provide responsive command and control, generate the desired effect, assess our level of success, and retain the flexibility to reengage with precision when required.”¹⁴ The vision is clear with regard to the desired effects of fires with increased accuracy and devastating lethality at extended ranges. It is not clear, however, exactly how we will apply Precision Engagement against an asymmetrical threat. Nevertheless, the precision engagement concept will use a wide variety of means, “including very accurate aerial deliveries or air drops, discriminate weapons strikes, and precise, all weather stand-off capability to provide a greater assurance of delivering desired effects, lessen risks to combat forces, while minimizing collateral damage.”¹⁵

If the United States Navy and Marine Corps are to remain on course with the strategic direction established in the NMS, they must successfully demonstrate JV2010 tenets at the operational/tactical level. A way of measuring the value of these concepts is to examine an OMFTS/STOM vertical assault operation executed in response to an asymmetrical threat, through an analytical, historical lens focused on two operational functions (i.e., Logistics and Fires). The success or failure of OMFTS/STOM logistics and fires at the operational level has broader implications for the Focused Logistics and Precision Engagement concepts of

JV2010. The results of this analysis suggest challenges for logistics and fires at all levels of war in the joint and combined arena.

ASYMMETRICAL THREAT: West Africa 2005

In the future, a possible scenario on the African continent may require a significant U.S. response to protect American lives and preserve our national interests (See Annex A).¹⁶ Further, the initial environment may reflect and require low intensity military operations other than war (MOOTW) contingencies. The threat may then rapidly escalate through actions (perceived as irrational) of rogue terrorists seeking to capitalize on a vulnerable U.S. ground force presence and American citizens (AMCITS) caught inside an unstable country. This unfolding situation may warrant the initial commitment of Marine forces *from the sea* under low threat conditions. However, it may then intensify rapidly to a high threat scenario. This represents the distinct possibilities of 21st Century asymmetrical threats that will define the nature of future combat operations, and is indicative of the combat operation that crippled the Task Force 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) and the 75th Ranger Regiment in Somalia. The following is a scenario that represents the distinct possibility of OMFTS/STOM operations applied against an asymmetrical threat.

OMFTS/STOM Scenario: Nigeria's ethnic unrest, emerging civil war, and terrorist threats to American citizens have caused the National Command Authorities (NCA) to initiate action at the request of the U.S. Ambassador in Lagos. The Ambassador has asked for additional Embassy security and the means to airlift U.S. citizens from remote locations within the Nigerian countryside. Specifically, he has requested airborne forces to evacuate a

significant concentration of Americans from the isolated city of Lokoja located 200nm from the coast. Lokoja is the birthplace of Nigerian president Obasanjo and over 3,000 U.S. citizens and foreign nationals have migrated there to escape the Hausa rebels' vicious onslaught. Most Americans are too fearful and exhausted to continue the additional 250nm journey through contested territory and have thus decided to remain in Lokoja. One U.S. diplomat working for the State Department country team at Lagos has described the situation as desperate and predicts the increased possibility for escalated threat levels, as well as the potential for U.S. direct combat action.

OMFTS/STOM Response: The NCA has responded to this crises by ordering direct military assistance to support the Ambassador's request. The 24th MEU(SOC) under JTF "2010" is operating off the western coast of Nigeria, and is to execute military operations as an enabling force for additional Joint Forces. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) see this developing situation as an ideal opportunity to show the advancements and successful application of the JV2010 tenets. The 24th MEU(SOC) mission is to conduct OMFTS/STOM operations in order to reinforce/secure the U.S. Embassy at Lagos, repair the runway at Lagos International Airport, and conduct the Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) of U.S. citizens and foreign nationals from Lokoja.

The 24th MEU(SOC) concept of operations calls for an amphibious surface assault into Lagos with a reinforced rifle company by LCAC and AAAV to provide U.S. Embassy security and AMCIT processing. HMH-464, the MEU(SOC) Aviation Combat Element (ACE) composite squadron, consisting of 8 CH-53E, 6 MV-22, 6 AV-8B, 6 AH-1W, and 3 UH-1N aircraft, will conduct a vertical assault into Lokoja. The vertical assault force

consists of a reinforced rifle company "Alpha" task organized for security and NEO processing. On D-Day, the 24th MEU(SOC) executes both the surface and vertical assault *operational maneuvers from the sea* flawlessly, utilizing speed and surprise in accordance with the OMFTS/STOM concepts. On D+1, the Hausa rebels supported by Osama Bin Laden advisors become increasingly hostile and plan to isolate Lokoja and destroy the Marine Company by moving a mechanized battalion north from Warri and an armored brigade south from Kaduna. Guerrilla cells operating in the mountains surrounding Lokoja possess a sophisticated networking/communications capability, and will support these coordinated movements with heavy mortars, anti-aircraft artillery (AAA), and man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS). Additionally, other guerrilla cells will coordinate multiple attacks on Nigerian government held facilities simultaneously. Osama Bin Laden's intent is to show the world that the U.S. cannot protect its citizens, while the rebels' immediate goal is to force the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Lokoja to facilitate their continued push southwest into Lagos.

The MEU(SOC) Commander, with direction from the JTF Commander, orders the Marine rifle company to hold Lokoja for the next 48 hours and continue processing/evacuating the U.S. citizens until reinforced by elements of the 82nd Airborne Division. He orders the ACE and Combat Service Support Element (CSSE) to coordinate the reinforcement and resupply of Alpha Company with 6 TOW HMMWV's, a forward arming and refueling point (FARP) with two CH-53E tactical bulk fuel delivery systems (TBFDS), 4 AH-1W's, and an Artillery Battery (-). This is complete on D+2 with the ACE strained to maximum performance. On D+3 elements of the 82nd Airborne Division are enroute to Lokoja, and Alpha Company has prepared defensive positions along high-speed avenues of

approach. The first rebel artillery rounds hit 100 meters from the FARP at 2300 D+3, and the advanced elements of enemy mechanized units have closed to within 20nm of Lokoja. The guerilla cells schedule coordinated attacks on government facilities to commence at 2345. The 24th MEU(SOC) ACE provides the “air bridge”, which is Alpha Company’s only line of operation/communication. The Alpha Company Commander is concerned that his indirect fire assets, Rotary-Wing and Fixed-Wing Close Air Support (CAS), and logistical support are insufficient for sustained operations ashore (SOA). Have we seen this before?

DIEN BIEN PHU REVISITED?

The above scenario has set the stage for an impending future battle with an unconventional, asymmetrical threat that would severely test OMFTS/STOM sustainment and fires capabilities. More importantly, it represents distinct similarities to the situation experienced by the French at Dien Bien Phu located approximately 200 miles from the French support base near Hanoi. Howard R. Simpson, a former U.S. Consul General, former advisor to the President of the Naval War College, and decorated U.S. Information Agency correspondent, writes, “The battle of Dien Bien Phu, in which the Communist-led Vietminh forces crushed elements of the French Colonial Army in Indochina, ranks with Agincourt, Waterloo, and Gettysburg as one of the great military engagements of history.”¹⁷

The French Airborne operations in Indochina doctrinally resemble the principles and technological exploitation aspects of STOM vertical assault operations. Doctrinally, the French used their airborne forces to secure operational objectives by rushing them from one hot spot to another. They would deploy rapidly from a support base to relieve isolated posts under enemy attack, reinforce infantry units during search and destroy or ‘mop-up’

operations, and execute direct action commando raids and intelligence tasks for the French High Command.¹⁸ In other words, the French leveraged technological advantages, maneuver, speed, and surprise to conduct combined-arms penetration and exploitation operations from a support base directly to operational objectives inland. This application of the French airborne concept mirrors the STOM vertical assault concept, except for the differences in the support base (Land versus Sea). The examination of *key lessons learned* from Dien Bien Phu for sustainment, fires and the difficulties of applying the French airborne doctrine against an unconventional, asymmetrical threat will thus highlight the critical challenges for the STOM vertical assault concept.

Sustainment Lessons Learned: *“An overdependance on air support and supply can lead to disaster during a guerilla-type campaign in difficult terrain or adverse weather conditions.”*¹⁹ The French deployed three ‘Groups Mobiles’ (roughly equivalent to Regimental Landing Teams) 300 kilometers from Hanoi to secure key terrain as a blocking position to deny the Vietminh an axis of approach into Laos. The risk associated with inserting a large force by air over extended distances is that the ratio of air support/lift availability to logistical requirements can become unbalanced and insufficient. When combat operations commenced at Dien Bien Phu, the Vietminh neutralized the airstrip forcing the French to deliver all supplies/reinforcements by parachute drop. This means of logistical delivery was vulnerable to concentrated Vietminh AAA fire and was heavily dependent on weather conditions. This threat subsequently caused the French to raise the drop altitude from 2000ft to 8000ft thus increasing the difficulty in getting the right reinforcements to the exact locations.²⁰ Therefore, the sustainment culminating point was

quickly reached at Dien Bien Phu because the requirement to sustain and reinforce the combat units exceeded the *means* (lift capabilities) of the French Air Force. This sustainment culminating point is a critical vulnerability of STOM operations supported *from the sea* by an “air bridge.”

A 1997 STOM Wargame conducted by AB Technologies Inc. for the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC) recognized that STOM and sustained operations ashore (SOA) will strain Sea-Based Logistics. Further, it stated that “sustainment for OMFTS/STOM focuses on a continuous measured pipeline of logistics throughput...logistics and sustainment will require a logistics-pull rather than a logistics-push...and will also require a ‘just enough, just-in-time’ type of logistics supply system.”²¹ The Marines of the West African scenario in 2005 may or may not be re-supplied by such a system, but even if they were, the primary *means* of delivery will still be the MV-22 and CH-53E. Although highly capable, both aircraft are vulnerable to AAA and MANPAD systems. If an asymmetrical threat such as that encountered by the French at Dien Bien Phu effectively neutralizes these aircraft, then the sustainment culminating point may very well be reached during combat operations.

More significantly, a mismatch between *ends* and *means* for technology-based capabilities and systems designed to support *conventional* STOM operations, but applied against an *asymmetrical* threat, may exacerbate this culminating point. If this occurs at the operational/tactical level, then the JV2010 Focused Logistics concept to “fuse logistics and transportation technologies to provide rapid crises response, to track and shift assets even while enroute, and to deliver tailored logistics packages and sustainment directly at the strategic, operational, and tactical level,”²² may ring hollow and hold no credible value.

Again, we need only to look at events in Somalia when the Task Force 160th SOAR air support could not re-supply their downed pilots and Rangers with additional ammunition to continue the fight.²³

Fires Lessons Learned: “*Underestimation of nonconventional units or a guerilla enemy [asymmetrical threat] by regular forces is a cardinal military sin.*”²⁴ The French forces at Dien Bien Phu underestimated the Vietminh’s capacity to deliver lethal, accurate, indirect fires. The French conventional training, tradition, and reliance on technology combined to produce a false sense of security and a dangerous tendency to denigrate the enemy’s fires capabilities.²⁵ The French wrongly assumed that General Vo Nguyen Giap’s artillery would be insufficient, immobile, and ineffective in the jungle environment. But Giap’s artillery proved far from ineffective, for he ingeniously moved his artillery pieces through the jungle, and the French counterbattery fire and air attacks failed miserably. The French artillery commander, Colonel Charles Piroth, was so devastated by the inability of his guns to counter the Vietminh fire, that he subsequently committed suicide.²⁶ Effective fire support is inextricably linked to target identification, but the jungle mountains screened General Giap’s Divisions and artillery emplacements from French observation aircraft and fighter-bombers. The Marines in the West African scenario lack sufficient quantities of both indirect fires and CAS for the asymmetrical threat they will encounter. Even when deployed as maneuverable supporting-fires forces, a Battery (-), 4 AH-1W’s, and 6 AV-8B’s would be strained to support a reinforced rifle company conducting SOA at extended distances. This lack of sufficient fires to support a sizable airlifted force with limited ground mobility is a critical vulnerability of STOM SOA supported *from the sea* by an “air bridge.”

Again, the 1997 STOM Wargame concluded that STOM is critically dependent on fire support and battlespace shaping,²⁷ but the Marines in the West African scenario lack this capability. Furthermore, as realized at Dien Bien Phu, the STOM wargame identified “the need for precise, responsive counter-battery fires and...the lack of this capability makes the execution of STOM much more difficult.”²⁸ Additionally, the wargame noted that if hostile artillery fire is encountered enroute to the objective, precise sea, air, or land counter-battery fires must be available to protect the force with a very high, first-round, hit capability.²⁹ Once again, the specific requirement for effective fires at the operational/tactical level will have implications for the JV2010 Precision Engagement concepts ability to “enable our forces to locate the objective or target...generate the desired effect, assess our level of success, and retain the flexibility to reengage with precision when required.”³⁰ These implications will subsequently influence the decisions by theater CINCs/JFCs to deploy and support Marine combat forces conducting STOM vertical assault operations against an asymmetrical threat in SOA.

CONCLUSIONS

Let’s put this analysis into perspective. I have described the limitations of one operational aspect [*vertical assault operation*] of only one service’s concept [*OMFTS/STOM*], focusing on only two operational functions [*logistics and fires*]. Further, I have tied key challenges associated with that type of operation, the service concept, and the operational functions to a historical tragedy. Now magnify that analysis to all the services’ evolving concepts, all combat operation possibilities, across all six functions of operational art [*command and control, intelligence, maneuver, protection, logistics and fires*], and the

challenge to realizing the concepts of JV2010 at the right time and place in the future by all services for joint/combined operations, seems daunting.

Yes, as articulated in JV2010, technology will benefit the process, but it should not drive it at the expense of operational art. It is prudent to focus on the asymmetrical threat possibilities and combinations, while extracting lessons learned from the past as a solid foundation for progress that will ultimately translate service concepts into Joint Doctrine and Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP's). We cannot look so far forward to the next technological innovation that we forget the lessons of the past, for the nature of war does not change. As new technologies and capabilities emerge incrementally to support OMFTS/STOM, CINCs/JFCs and the Marine Corps must be cautious when conducting STOM vertical assault operations against asymmetrical threats to avoid repeating the tragedy of Dien Bien Phu. As OMFTS/STOM co-evolve and converge with JV2010, the Navy/Marine Corps team will encounter and have to solve significant problems to the sustainment and fires operational functions. These problems will represent a microcosm of challenges for JV2010 Focused Logistics and Precision Engagement, and thus may influence our National Military Strategy to defeat 21st Century asymmetrical threats.

The JV2010 warfighting concepts may be fundamentally flawed because they in essence prepare us for the 'American way of war': short, hi-tech, decisive with minimized casualties in a strategy of annihilation.³¹ Furthermore, JV2010 may lack relevance to MOOTW [asymmetrical threats], and our Nations' primary focus on major theater war could impact service readiness and willingness for *other* military roles.³² If this is the case, then the Marine Corps' OMFTS/STOM concepts and DOTMLP co-evolution may also be prone to flaws when developed inconsiderate of the asymmetrical threat. This potential mismatch

between operational concept development and expected missions executed to defeat asymmetrical threats, may prove to be a decisive factor in the co-evolution of DOTMLP initiatives. This mismatch may in turn, have significant implications to the armed forces ability to support the National Military Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS / SOLUTIONS

The OMFTS/STOM concepts and supporting capabilities offer tremendous promise as viable instruments for our NMS force projection requirement. However, the Navy/Marine Corps team must continue to seek sustainment and fires solutions to minimize potential operational risks and critical vulnerabilities. The fusion of new technologies and operating systems may offer viable solutions to immediate problems, but this should not preclude focusing on deterrents to asymmetrical threats. More importantly, a comprehensive framework of *concept validation* must exist to identify potential solutions to these challenges. This concept validation process must therefore remain ‘threat-based’ to extract valid operational risks and critical vulnerabilities across the spectrum of conflict.

As outlined in the “Implementing Joint Vision 2010” paper, the solution to validating individual service concepts within the JV2010 conceptual template is to operationalize the vision through: 1) Concept Development, 2) Concept Assessment, and 3) Integration through experimentation.³³ OMFTS/STOM concepts will require continued development, expansion, and clarity to facilitate the assessment process. The assessment of OMFTS/STOM must evolve through the process of experimentation that will subsequently evaluate the impact on the six critical considerations of DOTMLP. The assessment phase of OMFTS/STOM should be an iterative process that may incur concept modifications to meet changing requirements

or new challenges. This assessment phase will include “a series of wargames and simulations, headquarters experiments, command post and field training exercises, each progressively more advanced.”³⁴ Finally, the integration phase must incorporate recommendations and solutions obtained via the assessment phase through co-evolution of the changes to DOTMLP.

The Joint Staff developed the Joint Vision Implementation Master Plan (JIMP) to provide policy and guidance for implementation of JV2010 and subsequent CJCS Joint Vision documents.³⁵ Additionally, the Secretary of Defense has designated U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) as the executive agent for Joint Experimentation. USJFCOM will “take a ‘Three Axis’ approach to experimentation, including a Revolutionary (far-term) Axis to develop capabilities beyond 2010, an Evolutionary (mid-term) Axis to develop JV2010 capabilities, and an Enhancement (near-term) Axis to improve current capabilities.”³⁶ The Navy/Marine Corps team must, therefore, remain engaged in JFCOM’s experimentation program and aggressively seek solutions to the sustainment and fires challenges for long-range vertical assault STOM operations applied against asymmetrical threats. It must develop wargame scenarios in the toughest environments with the most unpredictable enemy whose values are the antithesis of ours in order to acquire valid results. The Navy/Marine Corps team, as always, will win this battle and ensure OMFTS/STOM concepts lead to joint doctrine and TTP’s that provide critical support to the NSS/NMS and serve to secure operational/strategic objectives, thus guaranteeing that the tragedy of Dien Bien Phu will not be revisited!

SUMMARY

The Marine Corps' capstone operational warfighting concepts for maritime power projection, OMFTS/STOM, capitalize on the USMC maneuver warfare philosophy, and support the NSS, NMS, and JV2010 guidance to Shape-Respond-Prepare Now. The principles and execution of these concepts offer warfighting CINCs/JFCs options and solutions to asymmetrical threats in the 21st Century. OMFTS/STOM vertical assault operations incur challenges to sustainment and fire support similar to those encountered at Dien Bien Phu. This paper examined OMFTS/STOM vertical assault sustainment and fire support challenges through a *historical* lens as a precursor to the further study of *future* conflicts against asymmetrical threats. These operational challenges represent a microcosm of problems for the "Focused Logistics" and "Precision Engagement" tenets of Joint Vision 2010 at the operational level, and thus may influence our current and future strategy to defeat asymmetrical threats. The Navy/Marine Corps team will overcome these challenges, effectively support theater warfighting CINCs/JFCs, and succeed through an aggressive co-evolution of DOTMLP within the framework of JV2010, thus ensuring that we are able to meet the full spectrum of threats facing our Nation in this new century.

NOTES

¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Vision 2010 (Washington, D.C.: 1996), 1.

² *Ibid.*, 4.

³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Military Strategy, (Washington, D.C.: 1997), 1.

⁴ U.S. Marine Corps, Warfighting Concepts for the 21st Century (Concepts Division (C41)) (MCCDC, Quantico, VA 1996), II-3

⁵ *Ibid.*, I-3

⁶ *Ibid.*, I-11

⁷ *Ibid.*, II-6

⁸ *Ibid.*, II-8

⁹ *Ibid.*, II-22

¹⁰ Henry H. Shelton, "Operationalizing Joint Vision 2010," Military Review, June 1998, 81.

¹¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Vision 2010 (Washington, D.C.: 1995), 34.

¹² *Ibid.*, 25

¹³ *Ibid.*, 24

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 21

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21

¹⁶ John Locks, Patrick Sweeney, and William Kunzweiler, "Service Capabilities Vignettes: Scenarios and background information," Joint Military Operations Department (NWC 2073) (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1999), 45-60. This particular scenario is utilized as the bases for my examination of OMFTS/STOM operations, but is revised for this paper. Revisions from the original are *italicized* in Annex A.

¹⁷ Howard R. Simpson, Dien Bien Phu: The Epic Battle America Forgot. (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's Inc., 1994), xi

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, xx

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 96

²¹ AB Technologies Inc., Ship-To-Objective Maneuver (STOM) Wargame & MPF 2010 and Beyond Wargame. Vol 1: STOM Wargame. (Concepts Division (C41)) (MCCDC, Quantico, VA 1997), 23.

²² Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Vision 2010 (Washington, D.C.: 1996), 23.

²³ Mark Bowden, Black Hawk Down: A story of Modern War. (New York, NY: 1999), 189-195

²⁴ Howard R. Simpson, Dien Bien Phu: The Epic Battle America Forgot. (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's Inc., 1994), xix

²⁵ Ibid, xix

²⁶ Ibid, 82

²⁷ AB Technologies Inc., Ship-To-Objective Maneuver (STOM) Wargame & MPF 2010 and Beyond Wargame. Vol 1: STOM Wargame. (Concepts Division (C41)) (MCCDC, Quantico, VA 1997), 15.

²⁸ Ibid, 16

²⁹ Ibid, 17

³⁰ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Vision 2010 (Washington, D.C.: 1995), 21.

³¹ John D. Waghelstein, Joint Military Operations, Seminar #2 discussion, Naval War College, January 2000

³² Jon A. Kimminau, "Joint Vision 2010: Hale or Hollow?" Proceedings, September 1997, 79.

³³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Implementing Joint Vision 2010 (Washington, D.C.: 1995), 5.

³⁴ Ibid, 5

³⁵ Ibid, 5

³⁶ Ibid, 7

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ASYMMETRICAL THREAT: West Africa Scenario 2005
(Revisions to original Vignette are italicized)

BACKGROUND:

Nigeria, an Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) member, is important to world energy markets because it is one of the world's largest oil exporters. The Nigerian economy is largely dependent on its oil sector, which accounts for nearly 50% of Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP) and 95% of the country's foreign exchange earnings. The country is a major oil supplier to the United States and Western Europe. Nigeria is today's fifth largest supplier of oil to the United States. (SOURCE: U.S. Energy Information Agency)

Nigeria has been experiencing civil unrest, violence, and strikes for several months. These problems stem from bitter competition among the country's estimated 250 ethnic groups. The two largest groups, each comprised of tens of millions of Nigerians, are the Hausa in the north and the Yoruba in the south. Nigeria's President Obasanjo is a Yoruban and former military commander. He led Nigeria's military government from 1976 to 1979, and he is the first head of the Nation's democratically elected civilian government. The Hausa, however, controlled the former military government and dominate Nigeria's military today. *Osama Bin Laden is suspected of providing arms and finance to the Hausa. The Hausa have reportedly acquired Anthrax from Osama Bin Laden and have threatened to use it in areas held by Yoruban forces and U.S. civilian held locations.* Obasanjo's election has not calmed ethnic unrest. Locations of the latest outbreaks of violence include the Lagos area, southwestern Nigeria, the oil-producing states in the southeast, and Kaduna. Incidents have also occurred in the southeast in the disputed Bakassi Peninsula at the border area between Nigeria and Cameroon. There has been an increase in the number of unauthorized vehicle checkpoints, operated by armed bands of police, soldiers, or bandits posing as or operating with police or soldiers. Many incidents, including murder, illustrate the increasing risks of road travel in Nigeria. Reports of threats against firms and foreigners associated with the petroleum sector have been growing.

This violence and unrest has hindered Nigerian oil production. Disturbances, including sabotage, occupation of oil facilities, hostage-taking and kidnapping, have occurred in many areas of the oil-producing Niger River Delta. Production disruptions have intensified recently.

Weapons are reportedly coming in from neighboring Benin and Niger. In addition to illegal arms importation, an illegal arms factory discovered in Lagos's biggest market, was defused by police last week. Lagos has been hit by a series of bomb blasts, mostly targeting military establishments, since last December.

The U.S. Department of State lists 10,000 U.S. citizens living in Nigeria. Recently, Americans have been specifically targeted in the disturbances. *They and their vehicles may inadvertently become caught up in the disturbance. While traveling to Lagos from the*

countryside, two American college students on vacation were killed while trying to negotiate their way through a Hausa controlled checkpoint. Finally, Chevron said that saboteurs had deliberately spilled an estimated 2,000 barrels of oil from its pipeline in southern Nigeria. So far this year, more than 50,000 barrels of oil have been spilled in 40 separate sabotage incidents.

SCENARIO:

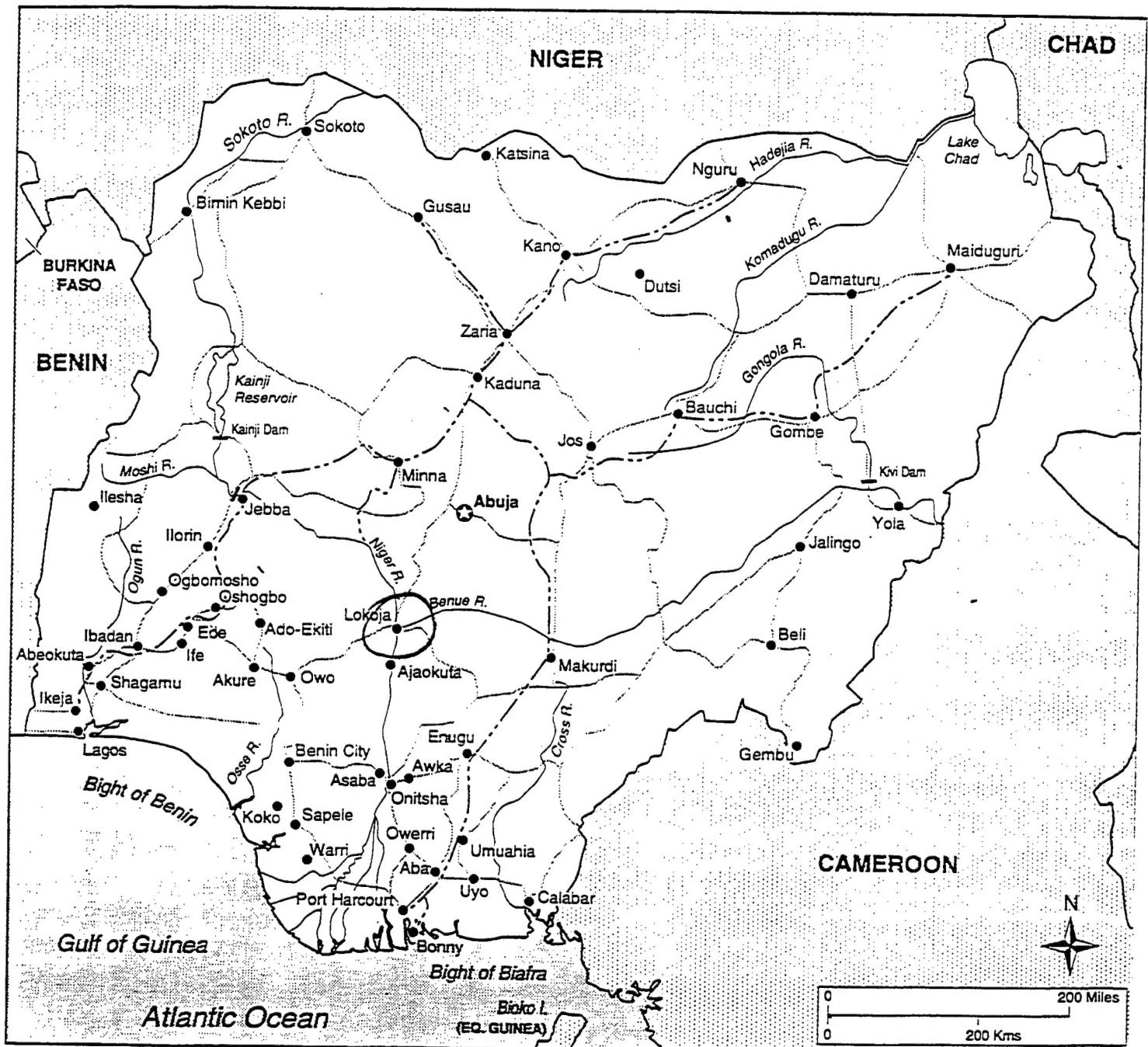
The Hausa-led military reversed last year's decision to hand over the government to a Yoruban civilian president. They took action, sweeping south from the Kaduna-Abuja region, while Obasanjo was on a state visit to Washington. Troops seized control of the port cities of Warri and Port Harcourt, closed the ports (halting approximately one third of Nigeria's oil exportation), and declared a curfew and martial law. The Army's chief, General Mtubi, has demanded Obasanjo's resignation and a return to military rule, while his staff has initiated negotiations with oil exporters on a "revised" payment schedule. The U.S. Department of State has refused to recognize the Mtubi regime.

One 10,000-man mechanized Division controls Warri, while another controls Port Harcourt. The Army's other two Division's, one armored with T-55 and Vickers Mk3 tanks, remain in the Kaduna area, *but are preparing to move south to Minna and Lokoja.* An operational squadron of 20 MIG-21 fighters, based in Abuja, is rebel-controlled, as is a squadron of 15 Bo-105D attack helicopters. *Although the rebels control these aviation assets, they do not have the pilots to fly them.* The rebels are in command of the tiny Nigerian Navy's sole frigate. She is armed with an AH-7 Lynx helicopter with 8 TOW missiles, anti-submarine torpedoes, and 8 Otomat surface-to-surface missiles. They also are in control of two fast patrol craft, each armed with 4 MM-38 Exocet missiles. All three vessels are patrolling the Warri area.

The military's Yoruban loyalist faction, the Presidential Guard brigade, is entrenched itself in Lagos, Nigeria's largest city. These loyalists, though lightly armed, vow to defend Lagos "to the last man." They impounded the Air Force's remaining fighter aircraft (a squadron of Jaquars) and all the C-130 transports and arrested the Hausa pilots, effectively grounding the fleet. The Lagos airport, where international flights have been suspended, is in loyalist hands. *The runways have been severely damaged by sabotage bombing attacks. It should be repaired and fully operational within 4 days.* Inshore patrol boats, meanwhile, protect the seaport.

Obasanjo, on CNN, appeals for direct U.S. military assistance. He cites the familiar phrase "ethnic cleansing" in referring to an, as yet, unconfirmed report of hundreds of Yorubans massacred by rampaging Hausas on their maneuver southward *to the enclave of Lokoja.*

Nigeria



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